

# WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR WEST CENTRAL WISCONSIN COUNTIES

OCTOBER 2002



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Workforce Development

## Unemployment rates below state and nation

Unemployment rates tumbled in September in all but three counties and in every metropolitan area in the state. That included the drop in the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate the Eau Claire-Chippewa metropolitan statistical area (MSA) to 4.8 percent. In the West Central region the rate declined to 4.0 percent, not seasonally adjusted.

The Eau Claire metro unemployment rate in September was down three-tenths of a percentage point from August and was down one-tenth of a point from last October. Only two other of the state's eleven metropolitan areas reported a lower unemployment rate over the twelve-month period.

Seasonally adjusted the state of Wisconsin unemployment rate in September was 5.1 percent, down from 5.2 percent in August, but higher than the 4.5 percent rate one year earlier. Nationally, the September rate was 5.6 percent.

The metropolitan unemployment rate is well below both national and state seasonally adjusted rates in September. The unemployment rate declined as the number of unemployed returned to work. Employment in September increased to 80,660 from 80,200 in August. Most of the increase resulted from workers returning to jobs associated with schools. That includes not only the jobs with local school districts, the UW, and technical college, but also jobs with school bus firms, food catering services, and janitorial and security firms. The increase in jobs this August was near normal for the month.

What triggered the gain in seasonally adjusted em-

ployment, and the reduction in unemployment, was the strength in manufacturing employment in September. In recent years, the loss of manufacturing jobs in September has been greater than this year.

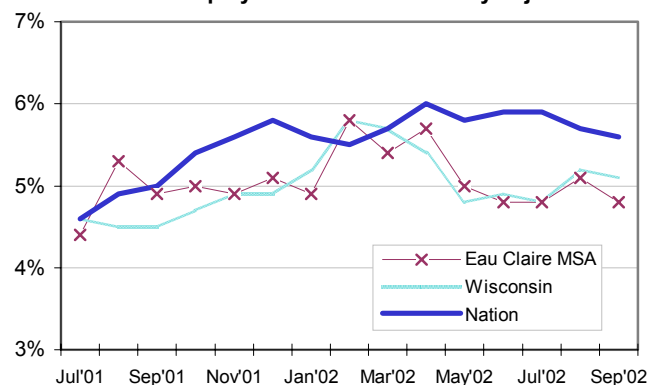
Unemployment rates in the rural counties of the region were lower than the state unadjusted rate of 4.3 percent. Dunn County, with a 2.9 percent unemployment rate, had the lowest rate in the region in September and the fifth lowest in the state. At the opposite end, St. Croix County, with a 5.4 percent rate, had the highest rate in the region and the tenth highest rate in the state.

The unemployment rate in Polk County was 4.4 percent, also higher than the state rate. The greatest decline in the region was in Pepin County where the rate dropped from 4.9 percent in August to 3.5 percent in September. The rate in Clark County showed the greatest drop from one year ago when the unemployment rate was 4.6 percent to the current rate of 4.1 percent.

The increase in unemployment rate from one year ago of 2.3 percentage points in St. Croix County was the largest increase not only in the region and but also in the state. The increase in rate in Pierce County from 2.7 percent in September 2001 to 3.8 percent this year was the second largest increase in the region. Both Pierce and St. Croix counties are

part of the large Minneapolis-St. Paul metropolitan area because of the many residents that commute to the Twin Cities for jobs. The increase in unemployment in these two counties is due in part to the influence of the Twin Cities where unemployment in-

Unemployment Rates-Seasonally adjusted



	Jul'01	Aug'01	Sep'01	Jul'02	Aug'02	Sep'02
Eau Claire MSA	4.4%	5.3%	4.9%	4.8%	5.1%	4.8%
Wisconsin	4.6%	4.5%	4.5%	4.8%	5.2%	5.1%
Nation	4.6%	4.9%	5.0%	5.9%	5.7%	5.6%

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creased from 4.0 percent in August to 4.1 percent in September and is half a percentage point higher than one year ago.

Not all of the increase in unemployment is due to the Twin Cities, though, as St. Croix County has experienced reductions in manufacturing jobs in the last year. The current estimate for manufacturing employment is 200 shy of last September. Nearly every county in the region lost manufacturing jobs in September, but the greatest reductions in Barron and St.

Croix counties came primarily from the loss of seasonal food processing jobs.

Claims for unemployment compensation benefits only increased in Barron County, however. All other counties reported fewer claims during the survey week in September than in mid-August. There were 4,409 claims for benefits filed in the region during the month. That is still nearly 1,200 more than in the same period one year ago, but the gap between last year and this is getting smaller.

#### September 2002 Estimates

Not seasonally adjusted	Wisconsin	EC MSA	Barron	Clark	Dunn	Pepin	Pierce	Polk	St.Croix
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	3,050,200	84,100	24,300	15,900	21,900	3,100	21,300	23,600	35,300
Employed	2,919,600	81,000	23,300	15,200	21,300	3,000	20,500	22,600	33,400
Unemployed	130,600	3,100	1,000	600	600	100	800	1,000	1,900
Unemployment rate(%)	4.3%	3.7%	4.0%	4.1%	2.9%	3.5%	3.8%	4.4%	5.4%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	2,856,100	77,100	21,800	10,000	15,300	2,100	10,500	15,400	28,500
Construction & Mining	135,740	4,330	890	690	730	170	500	830	1,750
Manufacturing	572,180	11,270	6,680	3,050	2,360	160	1,330	4,560	7,170
Transportation & Public Util.	133,190	3,340	730	470	540	100	510	480	1,090
Wholesale Trade	137,200	3,330	580	510	630	250	210	390	690
Retail Trade	508,710	17,150	4,150	1,290	4,170	470	2,420	2,780	6,380
Finance, Ins, Real Estate	153,640	2,930	410	230	440	70	330	480	1,010
Services	809,380	22,540	3,920	1,700	2,860	410	2,240	3,250	6,750
Government	406,070	12,170	4,460	2,040	3,590	490	2,960	2,610	3,700
<b>Change from previous month</b>									
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	-41,100	-100	-100	0	100	-100	-300	-100	-500
Employed	-24,500	400	-100	200	200	0	-200	0	-400
Unemployed	-16,600	-500	-100	-100	-100	0	-100	-100	-100
Unemployment rate(%)	-0.5%	-0.6%	-0.3%	-0.9%	-0.4%	-1.4%	-0.4%	-0.4%	-0.3%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	3,600	1,200	0	100	200	0	100	100	-100
Construction & Mining	-3,200	-100	0	0	0	0	0	0	-100
Manufacturing	-5,120	-150	-180	-60	-10	0	-20	-20	-120
Transportation & Public Util.	3,390	30	50	40	20	10	0	-10	20
Wholesale Trade	-1,180	-10	-10	0	0	-10	-10	-10	-20
Retail Trade	-6,230	-30	-100	-20	80	-20	70	-30	-40
Finance, Ins, Real Estate	-1,110	20	-10	-10	-10	0	0	0	-10
Services	-3,960	-170	-40	-10	0	0	10	-20	-350
Government	21,030	1,700	330	150	160	30	70	260	490
<b>Change from one year ago</b>									
<b>Civilian Labor Force*</b>	69,300	1,500	400	-100	900	0	400	700	1,000
Employed	51,100	1,500	200	0	900	0	100	600	200
Unemployed	18,200	0	200	-100	0	0	200	100	800
Unemployment rate(%)	0.5%	-0.1%	0.7%	-0.5%	-0.1%	0.0%	1.1%	0.4%	2.2%
<b>Total jobs, all industries**</b>	15,100	500	-100	-100	500	0	-500	200	1,000
Construction & Mining	2,800	400	-100	100	0	0	100	0	200
Manufacturing	-12,850	-680	-100	-10	50	-10	-10	-30	-220
Transportation & Public Util.	-1,200	-70	20	20	0	0	-20	0	0
Wholesale Trade	-310	120	20	-30	0	0	-10	20	60
Retail Trade	2,310	-210	-80	0	60	0	60	50	470
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	2,840	130	-20	0	20	0	10	20	90
Services	27,120	490	100	-10	70	10	-10	100	250
Government	-5,580	330	100	-110	270	-30	-550	30	160

\* Includes participants residing in area. \*\* Includes employment with employers located in area. Estimates are NOT seasonally adjusted. Current month estimates are preliminary. Totals may not add due to rounding. Calculations based on unrounded numbers.

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Direct questions and comments to: **Beverly Gehrke, Labor Market Analyst**

Hayward Job Center, 15618 Wind Rose Lane, Suite 108, Hayward, Wisconsin 54843

715-634-5289 715-634-6094(FAX) e-mail: [Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us](mailto:Beverly.Gehrke@dwd.state.wi.us)